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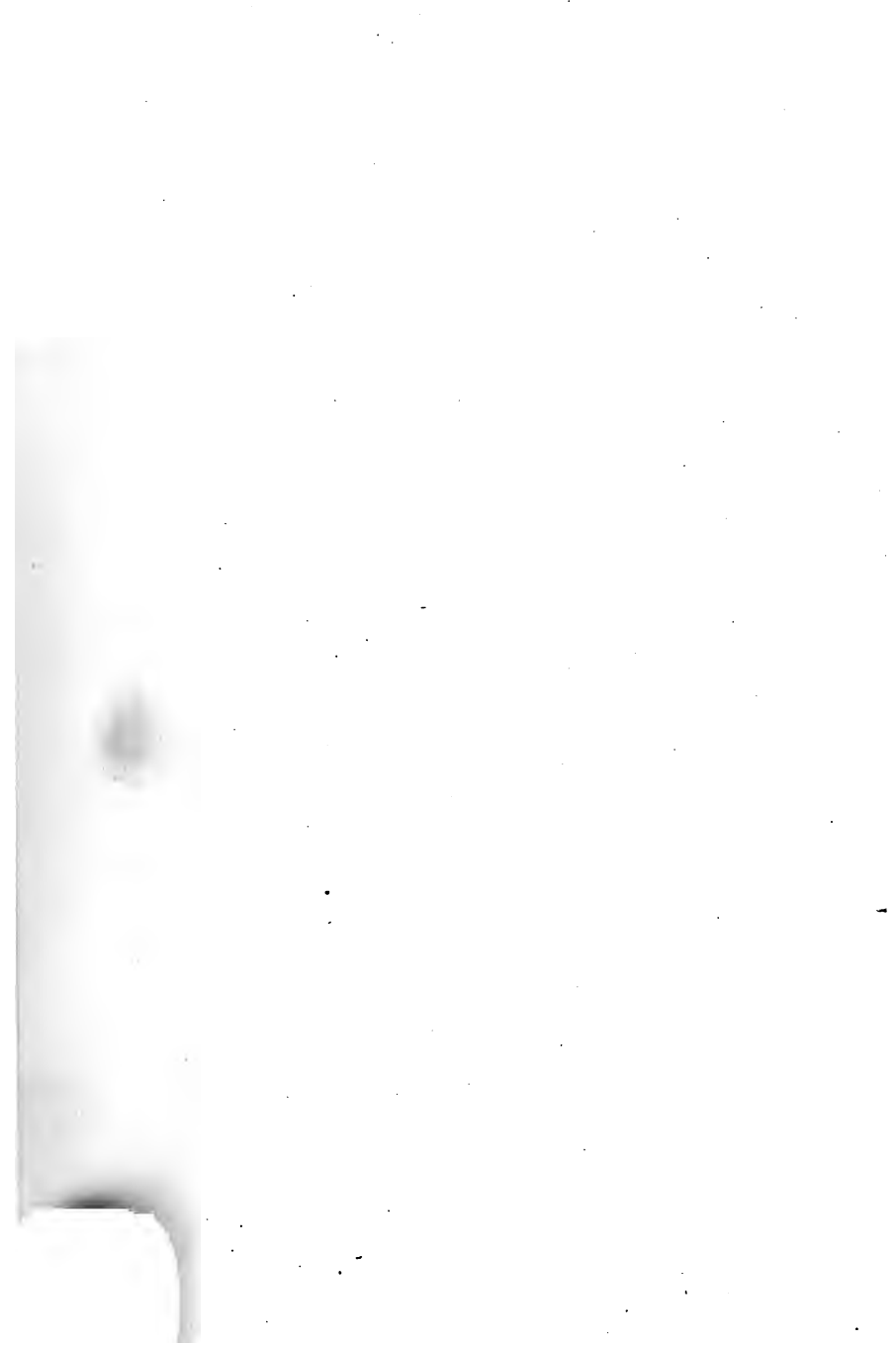
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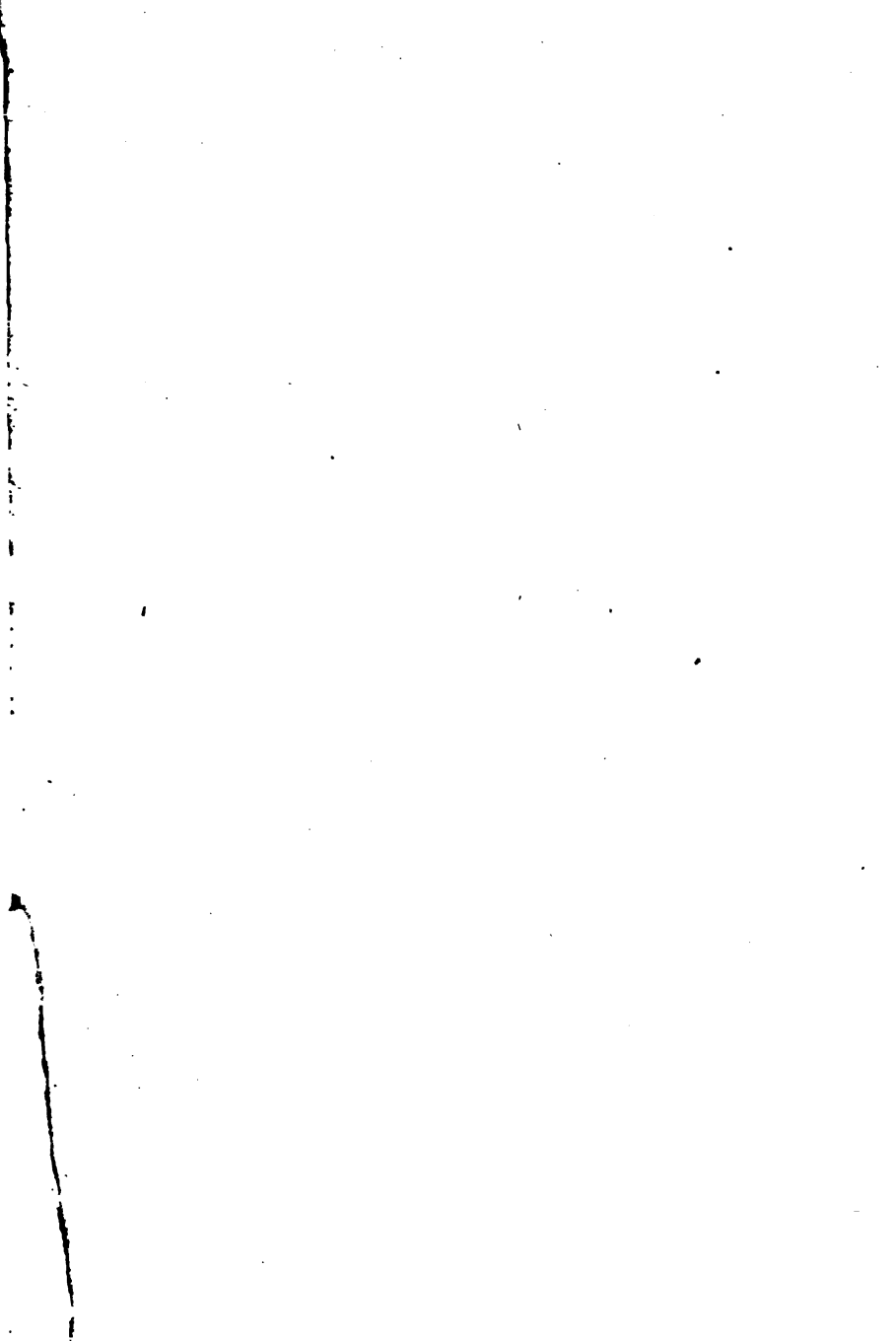
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LEAVES
FROM
HEMLOCK VALLEY.

A COLLECTION
OF
POEMS AND STORIES.

BY
KATE MERIDEN.

NEW YORK :
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TO MY FATHER

THIS VOLUME IS AFFECTIONATELY

INSCRIBED,

AS AN OFFERING OF LOVE,

FROM HIS DAUGHTER.

HEMLOCK VALLEY, Nov. 3, 1871.



CONTENTS.

	Page
AUTUMN	9
CHRISTMAS	10
OUT IN THE SNOW... ..	12
DO POOR MEN EVER DREAM?	14
A TRIBUTE	16
THE OLD YEAR AND THE NEW.....	18
OUR MOTHER	20
THE TEMPEST	22
THE DESERTED HOME	23
THE SEWING-GIRL	25
HOME	27
BEATRICE.....	30
A THOUGHT.....	40
A LADY.....	41
THE LAST DREAM	50
MA'S DEAREST FRIENDS	54
THE PRIDE OF THE FAMILY	57
ALONE	66
ONE OF LIFE'S PAGES	69
OUR BRETHREN	72

	PAGE
HOLY PLACES	73
WHAT I LIKE	75
TO MY BROTHER.....	77
NEVER DESPAIR.....	79
REST.....	81
TO MY SISTER	83
TO MAY WHITE HOLMES.....	85
LINES	86
THE VILLAGE	88



LEAVES FROM HEMLOCK VALLEY.

AUTUMN.

"THE GRASS WITHERETH, AND THE FLOWER FADETH."

THE trees have hung their banners
Of purple and of gold;
The Summer flowers faded;
The year is growing old.

Time, like a stream, is gliding
So noiselessly away;
Buried beneath its current
How many mortals lay!

The vines lie dried and withered;
The leaves begin to fall;
Thus, with unerring footstep,
Shall Autumn come to all.

CHRISTMAS.

"ON THE STILL AIR THERE FLOATS A PEAL OF CHRISTMAS BELLS."

CHRISTMAS has come! The angels sing for joy.
Lo, on the eastern horizon rises a star!
A glorious beacon, flooding the world
With light. All nature wakes to greet the new-
born King,
While angels strike their harps anew, and sing,
Glory to God on high, on earth good will to men.

Glorious message! Well may man rejoice;
With herald angels spread the joyful tidings 'round;
The mighty Counsellor, the Prince of Peace,
Unfurls His banner—the banner of the cross—and bids
The raging tumult cease. May man respond,
And Rachel no longer mourn her buried dead.

Belona, bow thy head ; Messiah comes !
And when His sceptre sways the nations of the earth
Thy reign is o'er ; man shall learn war no more.
Bring the green myrtle now, the pine and laurel twine ;
Wreath your temples, and make them glorious
Within. No earthly monarch comes ; He shall
be called

The Lord our Righteousness. Though earth be moved,
And kingdoms melt away, fixed and immovable
He sits, through endless day, while cherubim
And seraphim proclaim His everlasting praise.



OUT IN THE SNOW.

"Out in the snow!" a schoolboy cried,
"Who'll be the first down this hill to ride?
Hurrah for us all! here we go,
Gliding along on the smooth, white snow."

"Out in the snow!" sighed a fair girl;
A tear-drop froze on her auburn curl;
Her lips quivered; she murmured low,
"It's bitterly cold out in the snow!"

Out in the snow went ladies fair,
Wrapt in such robes as the rich may wear;
They called it pleasant—very fine—
Said they liked the snow—the Winter time.

"Ah, it snows!" groaned a widow poor,
As three hungry children left her door;

"O God! alas! must my babes go,
Hungry and cold, out in the snow?"

Life's changing scene! varied the style;
There's some born to weep, some born to smile;
Hearts that rejoice—that want ne'er know
Pity the lone ones out in the snow!



DO POOR MEN EVER DREAM ?

Oh, tell me, do poor men ever dream ?

Does their fancy ever roam

To that far-off land beyond the sea,

Its towers and lofty domes,

And people the earth with sunny forms,

And beautiful temples rear ?

Do their hearts beat quick, their blood flow warm,

Because of the good that's here ?

Or say, do they smile a bitter smile,

Made of scorn and mockery,

And tell you they have no time to dream

Of bright lands beyond the sea ?

Crushing sweet flowers beneath their feet,

Calling poetry a lie,

While the stars shine on, and angels weep,

As they ask the reason why ?

For there is a land that's fairer far
Than the land the poets love,
A Heaven of peace to call their own—
That beautiful world above.
And the good God has given to all
A share of His own rich love,
And though a poor man has little here,
For him there is much above.



A TRIBUTE

TO THE LATE WILLIAM H. HERBERT.

"MAN'S INHUMANITY TO MAN MAKES COUNTLESS THOUSANDS
MOURN."

THOU art gone, Herbert ; no more may man approve
Or disapprove thy doings. Scandal may wage
Bitter war against thee ; thou shalt heed it not.
Calm and still thou liest, where no strife of tongues
May ever reach thee.

I would weep for thee, weep bitter tears, if tears
Would aught avail ; weep to think that on this earth
Dwells a man that would blazon thy wanderings
To a world's cold gaze, and, if 'twere possible,
Would break thy heart, already broken.

No prayer was uttered o'er thy resting-place ;
The cold sod was heaped upon thy breast, perchance,

Without a tear ; but thou shalt rest as sweetly ;
The winds shall chant thy requiem ; the sweet moon,
With silvery light, shall shine upon thy grave.
Farewell, Herbert, farewell ! May God have mercy
Upon those who showed thee no mercy.



THE OLD YEAR AND THE NEW.

THE old year's dying! From the buried past
Echoes the sad, sweet memories of yore.
Time's going! Listen while the wint'ry blast
Wails of the hours that shall return no more.

The noontide's paling! The Orient far,
Star-gemmed with glory, told of time to come—
Herald the dawn of Bethlehem's bright star—
Messiah's reign—His work on earth begun.

Oh, Prince of Peace! before Thee we are bending
To ask Thy favor for the coming year;
May Thy Good Spirit, all our ways attending,
Grant us Thy peace, bid tumults disappear.

Nations shall learn the joyful story,
And waiting hearts no longer faint nor fear;
Though time grows old, each sun shall set in glory :
Prosperity attend each glad New Year !



OUR MOTHER.

MOTHER, I am weary, weary,
And my heart is sad to-day;
Sad, dear mother, for I'm thinking,
That from earth you've passed away.
Cherished joys have now departed,
Earth's bright hopes have faded too,
And my soul now feels the anguish,
That before it never knew.

Home, our home. O God! the feeling,
When the loved ones gather there,
And we kneel to ask Thy blessing;
Then we miss our mother's prayer.
Gentle were thy words of kindness,
Noiseless were thy works of love,
Like sweet incense they were offered,
With the spirit of the dove.

Ah, alas! how much we miss thee;
All things now seem cold and chill;
Earth's a dreary blank without thee,
And our hearts are aching still.
Can we give thee up, sweet mother,
And thy love no longer know?
Jesus, Saviour, see our sorrow,
Help us now to bear our woe.



THE TEMPEST.

HARK! hark! the wind goes howling by,
The stormy waters roar,
The raging billows mount up high,
And darkness gathers o'er.

The lion rises from his lair,
And howls in dread dismay;
Mountains and hills catch up the sound,
While vivid lightnings play.

It rushes on to forest wild,
It rends the noble oak;
The fir-tree lifts its towering head,
Then bends beneath the stroke.

The storm-king rules.—No mortal man
May from his fury fly,
For in an awful tone is heard
Jehovah passing by.

THE DESERTED HOME.

Oh! where are the prattling ones that played
Beneath the old willow tree,
The gentle mother that watched their sport
And laughed at their childish glee?
Where is the father who fondly smiled
On each dear and cherished one?
The light grows gray on the cottage wall,
But that father does not come.

In a distant shade a new-made grave,
Over which the lilies weep;
The father rests there. The children fair
In another clime doth sleep.
The mother that watched their infant sports,
She, too, has passed away;
And where once so glad, 'tis lone and sad,
And falling fast to decay.

While the night-wind moans in hollow tone,
Over that deserted home,
It seems to say, in its solemn lay,
Oh, why did the loved ones roam?
The willow beside the cottage door
Seems to catch the mournful song,
And sigh, as it bends its branches low,
Oh why They are gone, all gone?



THE SEWING-GIRL.

WORK on, poor one, work on, toil away,
Don't stop to think; thou hast no time to pray;
How canst thou so presumptuous be?
Thought is a luxury that's not for thee.

Work on, work on, though thy eyes are dim
With the tears that fall on your fingers thin;
Stop not to dream of thy mountain air,
Of its valleys green, or its flowers fair.

Work on, work on, though so worn and sore—
When thy heart is broke thou canst work no more.
Thy young life crushed like a withered thing,
Then the cold grave to thee will comfort bring.

* * * * *

Ah! ye, who dwell in hotbeds of ease,
Not dreaming of her who toils you to please,

Do you ever think the rich robes you wear,
Were made amidst scenes of bitter despair?

When ye lie stretched on your beds of down,
With nought disturb your slumbers profound,
In a lone garret, wretched and cold,
The sewing-girl toils for a mite of your gold.

Chide not her tears that bitterly flow,
Thou never hast known her want nor her woe.
But when winter winds sweep by your own door,
May God give you hearts to pity the poor.



HOME.

HOME! what a world of meaning in a single word, and, as we repeat it, how many thoughts come crowding thickly up for utterance. Thoughts of a mother's fervent kiss, of a father's fond embrace, as he calls on Heaven to bless his returning ones.

"I am going home," we hear a manly voice exclaim. Can it be that that pleasant voice belongs to that grave business man, who, but an hour ago, looked as though he thought boxes and bales were the only earthly things worthy of attention? Yet it is the same, with this difference, he is the business man no longer, something of his boyhood is returning. Ah! God be thanked, that, amidst the fierce strivings of the world, that soul-destroying game of dollars and cents, in which the greater part of mankind have ventured, there yet remains

to us the word *home*. Hard indeed must the heart be that could withstand its spell.

Are there any waters as bright as the clear silvery streams that wind along the flower-decked knolls, where in childhood we have often strayed?

We may form new associations, and fancy we have almost forgotten the land of our birth, yet, at some quiet hour, as perchance we sit listening to the sighing of the winds, how does the memory of other days come stealing over the soul, and bring us back to the scenes of our childhood. We press again the hands of loved ones gone, we listen to voices long hushed, we hear again the songs which a mother sang, and we roam the old familiar haunts.

Then it is that a feeling of melancholy comes over us, which, like low, sweet melody, is pleasant, though mournful to the soul.

The Swiss general, who leads his army into a foreign land, must not suffer the sweet airs of Switzerland to be sung in the hearing of his soldiers; for, at the thrilling sound, they would leave the camp, and fly to their own green hills.

The traveller amidst burning sands, or traversing the land of eternal snow, though the hand of time may have whitened his locks, and ploughed deep furrows on his brow, and his heart have been chilled till the fountain of his love had almost ceased to flow; yet, upon some quiet eve, as he watches the sun sink behind the western hills, he will think of home, and his heart will yearn for the love of other days, while he wipes away a tear.

We may find skies as bright, and climes as beautiful, and friends as devoted, yet all that will not usurp the place of home.

There is but one spot where none will sigh for an earthly home. The flowers that bloom in that land will never fade, the waters that wind along those verdant shores will never cease their crystal flow, and the friends and loved ones that meet there, will meet forever, for it will be our *Heavenly enduring home*.

BEATRICE.

I WILL tell this story as it was told to me,
Though years have passed, and he who told the
tale is gone

To join the solemn throng of noiseless sleepers, who
Inhabit that strange city of the silent dead.

He said that he had travelled far, from east to west,
In search of that vain thing which fools call happiness ;
Beneath Italia's sky, tasted its fruit and wine,
Till, weary of the luxury of that fair clime,
He turned away to seek for change in ruder scenes.

He journeyed far one day, into a forest wild,
Where the tall cedar and the waving pine looked
down

Upon the tangled brushwood. There the rattlesnake
Had made its nest, and the poisonous serpents drank

The moisture from the deadly nightshade, whose
dark leaves
Before had kissed the dewdrops from the damp cold
earth.

Within this distant wild, he thought himself alone ;
Indeed, had quite made up his mind no human foot
Beside his own had ever trod the place before.
When, as the twilight flung its sombre shadows round,
A sudden light, like some lone star, shone through
the pines,
And then a solemn voice chanted the vesper hymn.

Directed by the sound, he said, he sought and found
A strange abode, half sheltered beneath a rock ;
A lonely man, with features sad, stood near the door,
And in the gath'ring gloom chanted the solemn hymn.
The old man paused as he approached ; and kindly bid
Him welcome, "Stranger, though rude my grot, thou
canst share

The evening meal, and rest thy weary limbs awhile."

Glad to obtain a resting-place, the traveller said
He'd tarry for the night, and with the sun pursue

His journey ; “ But why so sad, my friend ? ” he asked,
As they sat down to partake of the humble fare.

“ Stranger, wouldst thou hear the tale, why I sought
this spot,

Far from the haunts of man ? Listen, the story’s short.
A traveller like thyself, I roamed in distant climes,
To satisfy the longings of a restless soul,
‘ For idleness ne’er brings pleasure.’ While jour-
neying

I chanced to meet a matron grave, whose only child
Was a daughter of rare loveliness, who helped her
To eke out a scanty, but honest livelihood.

“ Upon those features, wonderfully fair, there dwelt
A look of sadness, that ne’er failed to interest.
She was called Beatrice. The name suited her well.
No one could gaze upon her sad, sweet countenance
Without wishing to know what grief saddened her
soul.

“ To share her burden gladly I would have given
All that I possessed ; for dearer than all the world
beside

Was the fair Beatrice, whom I had learnt to love.
Yet ah, alas! some secret spell kept us apart,
For when hopeless, then most I felt she cared for me.

“ At length her mother died, and she was left alone;
Once more I urged her to share my fortune, and
let

Me make her happiness my chief concern, while she
Forgot her sorrows. She cast a grieved look on
me—

‘This ne’er can be, to-morrow I must leave this
place,’ she said,

‘And, though it break my heart, must never see
you more.’

‘Ah, why,’ I cried, ‘this cruel fate, this mystery?
Tell me the cause at least, and let me share your
grief.’

“ ‘A solemn vow now seals my lips, that naught
but death

Absolves me from. May Heaven have mercy on
us both!’

‘Ah, then,’ I said, wringing her hand, ‘promise
me this—

Should the time come when, sore distressed, you
would need aid,

You will come to me. Promise me this, Beatrice.'

'I promise,' she said mournfully, and turned away.

I rose the following morn with the break of day,
And turned my steps to her abode, but all was still
And desolate, as though the place had been a
tomb.

Ah! then I felt alone, for Beatrice was gone.

"And now among the busy haunts of men, I sought
To drown my sorrow, and forget this hopeless
love,

But all in vain—in city, country, village, town,
In journeying far across the shuddering sea,
Her image fair, like a sad spectre, followed me.

"Years glided on. During this time I vainly sought
To discover her hiding-place, but it was vain.
Then I chose solitude, and from the world did
turn

Away, to hide my sorrow, in this vast retreat.

“One summer eve, as I lay stretched upon my
couch,
List’ning to the sad notes of a lone whip-poor-will,
I fell asleep. When I awoke, a single star
Shone through the lattice, yet while I gazed it
vanished,
And then I heard a voice distinctly call my
name.

“It was no fancy, of the fact I was assured;
Yet vain at first was the attempt I made, to
solve
The mystery. At last I thought of Beatrice.
Ah! then I knew it was her voice that called
to me.

“With naught to guide me, I went forth to search
for her
Once more. Sometime the thought would come
to me, that she
Was dead—yet sad and worn, I still pursued the
search.
One evening I had travelled far out of the town,

Into a wretched by-way, where the humble dwelt.
Before a crazy tenement two women stood,
And talked aloud. 'The doctor says that she will die,'
Said one. 'Alas! 'tis sad for her, in this strange
place;

A lady born to better things.' The other said,
'Aye, poverty, it is indeed a cruel thing.'

"I brushed past the two women, and they stared
at me,

As though they thought me mad, and would have
held me back.

I sought the topmost floor—in an apartment
bare

Of furniture, except a chair and narrow bed,
I found her whom I sought, my long-lost Beatrice.

"But oh, so changed was she; yet still her wondrous eyes

Retained their beauty, and her sad, sweet smile
lingered

Upon her wasted features. She was lovely still,
Like a crushed lily, fading at the dawn of day.

“‘Ah, I am blest!’ she said; ‘I now can die in peace; Heaven has heard my prayer; it was my last desire Once more to see you, ere I cross the bound of time.’ ‘Ah! why then did you leave me, Beatrice?’ I asked, Taking her wasted hand in mine; ‘why did you go?’

“‘The time has come; I now am able to explain What seemed so strange, the mystery that vexed you
sore.

First, I must tell you that, to save my father’s name, I promised to become the wife of one who was As merciless as death, and would have ruined him.

“‘My father died; he blessed me with his dying breath; His honor was the sacred trust he left to me; The one to whom I sold myself had gone abroad; On his return, he said, he’d claim his promised bride.

“‘A year had passed away, yet he did not return; My mother met you, and you proved yourself a friend, Whom we did learn to value every day and hour; And when my mother died, gladly she would have
left

Her daughter in your care, but for the cruel vow
That bound me to another, whom I ne'er could love.

“ ‘Fearing to trust myself—for now I may confess
How much I cared for you—I went away, and hid
In this dark spot, where it pleased Providence that I
Should hear that he to whom I’d bound myself
was dead.’

“ ‘You must not leave me now; you are my own!’”

I cried;

‘Oh, Heaven is merciful; you yet will be my bride.’

‘Oh, hush, my dearest friend,’ she murmured,
solemnly,

‘I am Death’s bride; yet, ’tis not wrong to think
of thee,

And a short time enjoy thy dear society.’

“Ah, she must live! I could not think that one so fair
Would die. Yet, ah, alas! I did deceive myself.
She faded, day by day, till, on a summer eve,
She sank to rest, like a bright star in the blue sky.

“Stranger, the story’s told. I can but rest awhile
In this lone spot, far from the bustle of the world,

Which heedeth not an old man's sorrow, and,
perchance,
Would call him mad. If thou shouldst ever travel near
This forest wild, come, share again his homely fare."



A THOUGHT.

WALKING in a garden, one morning in Autumn, I was much struck with its barren and desolate appearance. The wind whistled drearily through the leafless branches of the trees; the vines lay dried and withered; not a single flower remained.

Saddened by the cheerlessness of the spot, I was turning away, when a sunbeam chanced to fall upon a withered leaf, and immediately a dewdrop glistened, like some rare and precious jewel, with a thousand colors.

Like the dewdrop, I thought, is a beautiful mind. The body may decay, and time bring wrinkles that shall mar the loveliness of the fairest forms, but the thoughts of the immortal mind shall never perish, but shall grow on and on even into eternity.

A LADY.

BY KATE MERIDEN.

WHAT is a lady? Who will tell?
A woman true, or flashy belle,
A bunch of silk, gewgaws, and lace,
Whose only gift's a doll-like face?

“Don't loll on your chair, Nellie. Sit up straight.
Shall I ever teach you to behave like a lady?”

To teach her daughter to behave like a lady seemed to be the chief aim of Mrs. Bently's existence. Early and late she labored to bring about this desired object. How far she succeeded we shall be able to judge by-and-by.

The Bentlys' circumstances were what would be termed easy. Their residence was elegant in all its appointments, and, so far as the details of housekeeping were concerned, no one surpassed Mrs. Bently; and she congratulated herself that the method of training her children was equally faultless.

For her elder daughter the best masters were employed, and already, both in music and drawing, the young lady considered herself a proficient, and was longing for the period when, to use her mother's expression, "she should be introduced."

"How would you look, child," continued Mrs. Bently, "lolling in that fashion in your uncle's drawing-room? If I could only make a lady of you!"

"Why, of course, ma, you don't expect me to loll in Uncle Edward's drawing-room. I'm at home now," returned the naturally indolent Nellie. "Do you know Lizzie Mitchel's at uncle's this winter?"

"I heard something about her going to school. Hellen must be crazy to surround her with luxuries that she cannot long expect to enjoy," returned Mrs. Bently.

Hellen Mitchel was Mrs. Bently's youngest sister, yet, though the youngest in the family, she had drank more deeply of the cup of affliction than any of her sisters.

Her husband, when in command of the doomed steamer "Muriel," had found a watery grave, and his affairs were found so complicated that it was an easy

matter for designing ones to rob the poor widow of her all.

Yet Hellen Mitchel was a woman of superior mind ; and while she felt how deeply she had been afflicted, she knew that, with the blessing of Heaven, on her own exertions alone must she now look for the means of obtaining a livelihood for her children. It was true that among her near relatives there were many who possessed a large share of the world's goods, who came forward to offer her a home, yet, for the sake of her children, she declined these offers.

Several evenings previous to the period when we first introduced Mrs. Bently to the reader's notice, Mrs. Mitchel was also conversing with her daughter.

"You are going, Lizzie, into an entirely different scene to what you have been accustomed since your poor father's death. I know you will be surrounded with temptations that are peculiarly attractive to a young person like yourself; yet, I am convinced I should be doing wrong to reject your uncle's offer, and thereby deprive you of the advantages of a good education, which may hereafter be your only means of dependence."

"Do not fear, mother! I shall try to remember what you would wish," said the young girl, earnestly.

"I have every confidence in you, Lizzie; you will improve your time, you will act your part well."

"I will be a woman! that is your favorite charge. I will remember it, mother, and be a woman!"

"God bless and help you, dear child; you will need all your decision of character," said Mrs. Mitchel, kissing the earnest face turned to her own.

Very different were the preparations made by the two sisters for the departure of their daughters.

Mrs. Mitchel's meagre purse would admit of no display, and while yet the wealthy Mrs. Bently was consulting a host of milliners, dressmakers, etc., Lizzie Mitchel, arrayed in a plain brown merino, with a black leather trunk that contained her neat though unpretending apparel, was travelling toward her uncle's elegant mansion.

In process of time Mrs. Bently's arrangements were completed, and with several well-filled trunks, and many parting injunctions to behave like *a lady*, Helen Bently left for her uncle's residence.

Let us look in upon the cousins three weeks

after they were established in Mr. Maudant's city mansion.

Our readers may follow us to a spacious chamber on the right wing of the house, where, around the couch of a child who is evidently an invalid, are gathered three young ladies, two of whom we may recognize as Lizzie Mitchel and Nellie Bently; the other is Mr. Maudant's only daughter, who with her cousins, have come to pay a visit to her little brother.

"Come, Lizzie, you will not go back to your books to-night, surely," said Emma Maudant, laying her hand on her cousin's arm. "Be sociable for once, and come in the parlor. Let's see, Nell, whom do we expect to call?" turning to her other cousin.

"Colonel Barister certainly, Doctor Winton, and the young theologian who asked after Miss Bently the last time he called."

"Lizzie can't leave Willie," said the sick child, holding out his hand imploringly; "Lizzie won't go away!"

"No, Willie, no; I will bring my books, and after I get through with my translations I will tell you about David keeping his father's sheep."

"Dear, good cousin Lizzie," murmured the child.

"Never mind, Em.," said Helen Bently, as Lizzie left the room. "If she won't come, let her stay. Perhaps it's just as well; you know she can't expect to enjoy company, etc., very long."

This remark, though not intended to be heard, reached her cousin's ears, and for a moment a painful expression rested on Lizzie's fair features. It soon disappeared, however, and in its stead came a look full of confidence and hope, as she slowly murmured, "I will be a woman! God helping me, I will not disappoint dear mamma. No one so well as myself knows that I have no time for enjoyment," and with a resolute step Lizzie returned with her books to the sick-chamber. Sounds of music and mirth from the parlors below often fell on the student's ears, yet it only seemed to increase the earnestness with which she applied herself, and two hours elapsed ere she laid aside the neatly written translation, and looked up in the little white face which was watching her so anxiously.

"Got done, Lizzie?" said the child; "now I shall hear about David, who took care of his father's sheep."

But hark!" he continued, raising his little, thin hand, "isn't that Mr. Prentice, the young minister, that I hear talking down-stairs? He is the only one that ever comes from the parlor to see Willie."

"I don't think he'll come to-night, Willie, it's getting late."

"Well, never mind, Lizzie, go on with the story."

The simple story of the youthful David was begun, and while the child lay with his great blue eyes earnestly fixed on the speaker, a figure glided noiselessly into the apartment, and only when Willie had kissed his cousin "good-night," and turned to compose himself for sleep, did he notice Mr. Prentice standing at the foot of his couch.

"I've just come to say 'good-night' to you, Willie," said the gentleman, as the child endeavored to raise himself from his pillow. "Miss Lizzie will scold if I keep you longer awake."

"Lizzie never scolds, sir."

"No," returned Mr. Prentice, smiling, "Excuse me for mentioning such a thing;" and for some time after he conversed pleasantly, until Willie's measured breathing assured them that he was fast asleep.

In that evening Lizzie secured a kind, judicious, and faithful friend; and, several years after, when standing by little Willie's grave, with humble gratitude her thoughts reverted to the hour when she first met Carlton Prentice, in the sick child's chamber.

We pass over a period of several years, and when we again enter Mrs. Bently's sitting-room, we find that the only occupant of the apartment besides herself is a lady, her only unmarried sister, who now resides in the house.

"You do not seem at all hopeful, Caroline, concerning Jennie's marriage," said the lady, looking at her sister. "Surely it met with your approval."

"I have no fault to find with her choice, certainly," returned Mrs. Bently; "but the truth is, Mary, I have been disappointed in one of my daughters, and I hardly dare hope for anything better for her sister. I am sure no woman has done more for her children than myself; I spared neither time nor money to make a lady of Nellie, and expected she would be everything I could wish; yet there seems to be no comfort in her home; her housekeeping is left entirely to hired servants, for she is never satisfied unless when abroad,

and it is a fact, visible to all, that her husband is a most unhappy man. Now there is Helen, who has had neither the time nor means to lavish upon her daughter. She has more than realized her fondest hope. Lizzie is now the Principal of the Greenville Seminary, and is well able to provide all the luxuries as well as comforts of life for the family. In the Fall she is to marry Carlton Prentice, who is now one of the most distinguished clergymen in the city ;—where a younger sister is appointed to fill her place in the Seminary. Surely Helen has been blessed in her children. Why am I less fortunate ?”

Mrs. Bently asked the question, but alas ! like hundreds before her, she failed to discover the true cause of her disappointment ; for while Helen Mitchel had labored to instill noble principles, and make a good and true woman of her daughter, her chief aim had been to adorn the person of her child ; the putting on of gold and costly apparel ; or, to use her own words, *to make her a lady.*

THE LAST DREAM:

Low loomed the sun upon the west,
Flooding with gold the tented plain,
Till vale and hilltop seemed to gleam
With amber from the other world.
Before his tent a soldier stood,
Gazing upon the gorgeous scene,
With parted lips and speaking eye.

His was a proud, a manly form,
Though hardly grown to man's estate.
Ambitious dreams fired his soul:
And though his heart beat high and warm
With love for home, and dear ones there,
Sylla and Marius never dreamed
Prouder, loftier dream, than he.

Sunset waned; no longer gleamed
The turrets of the far-off town;

The last faint blush of purple clouds
Faded quite away, still he stood,
While fancy wove a brilliant page,
Marked o'er with deeds of high renown,
And he the hero of them all.

The shadows lengthened, and the wind
With fitful moan swept through the pines;
The wood-dove's notes, like mournful dirge,
Floated upon the still, night air;
Yet, all unmindful of the ~~home~~, *from*
He watched the stars, and dreamed that he
Should shine, a planet in his sphere.

At length, weary of his vigil,
He lay him down to rest a while,
And as he sleeps, he dreams of home.
Once more his mother's hand is laid
Upon his brow. Soft music falls
Upon his ear. His dream of pride
Is all forgot. He slumbers well.

But hark! the clarion's wild notes!
What means that dreadful revelry?

That piercing cry, to arms! to arms!
Earth to her centre quakes and groans,
War-clouds fill the arch of heaven,
With lurid light! The clash of steel,
The tramp of hurried feet roll on.

Where is the dreamer? Where! O where!
Upon a snow-white steed he sits—
No knighted warrior at race
Or tournament e'er bore prouder,
Loftier mien, than he. His soul
Is fired. Bright visions of glory
Float before him now. On he goes.

He rushes madly on. The boom
Of cannon, war's wild din, inspires
His soul. Wildly he urges on
His foaming charger, amid the
Bristling legions. Many strong men
Fall before him, the victory
Is won. But oh, alas! alas!

While yet the shout of triumph falls
Upon his ear—why pales his cheek?

Why fades the flush from off his brow?
Why bends the form that ne'er had bent
To mortal man? He lays him down,
The conqueror with the conquered.

Sigh on, ye wild winds, wail

A dirge upon the air;

Where is the conqueror?

The wild winds answer, where?



MA'S DEAREST FRIENDS.

LETTY. My mother sends her compliments
To you, dear Mrs. Brune,
And hopes to have your company
On Monday afternoon.

Not a large party, ny no means;
Only ma's dearest friends;
Now, do not disappoint us all,
For on you ma depends.

To speak the truth, dear Mrs. Brune,
There's Miss Clotilda Breff,
That ma's invited, but, alas!
That lady's very deaf.

And though ma would not speak a word
Against a chosen friend,
She says 'tis perfect misery
The time with her to spend.

The Jinkinses are coming, too;
Nice girls enough, be sure;
But oh, dear me! they have such airs,
Though miserably poor.

You'll come? that's right; you always were
Ma's very dearest friend.
Good afternoon, dear Mrs. Brune;
A happy time we'll spend.

* * * * *

MOTHER. Well, Letty, have you come at last?
Have you been to Mrs. Brune's?
I hope that something will occur
On Monday afternoon.

Dear me! if it would only rain,
That would be quite the thing;

Between you, Letty, and myself,
I'll dread to hear her ring.

The Jinkinses will feel quite hurt
To meet plain Mrs. Brune :
Oh, dear me ! what a time I'll have
On Monday afternoon !



THE PRIDE OF THE FAMILY; OR, A MOTHER'S LOVE.

BY KATE MERIDEN.

HOME, our Home! O God! the feeling,
When the loved ones gather there,
And we kneel to ask Thy blessing,
Then we miss our mother's prayer.
Can we give thee up, sweet mother,
And thy love no longer know?
Jesus, Saviour, see our sorrow,
Help us now to bear our woe.

Our mother was a remarkable woman; those who knew her best will bear witness to that fact. When we say remarkable, we not only mean a very good woman, but one whose energy and perseverance had few equals; yet, dear, blessed mother! she had one weakness—it was our brother Willie. And truly was our brother one of whom any mother might have been proud. From a child he had been remarkable

for his manly bearing, good manners, and polite attention to those older than himself. It was a common remark among our visitors that Willie W. was a perfect little gentleman; and when he grew to boyhood, the promise of his earlier years was more than fulfilled. I remember once to have heard our father speak of his first introducing him in a large institution where he was anxious to secure for him the benefit of a liberal education.

On arriving at the place, he said, he was surprised to find the institute had received its complement of students, and was turning away much disappointed, when Dr. W., the principal, made his appearance, and, pointing to our brother, asked, "Is that the boy you wish to enter?"

Our father answered, and the good doctor, continuing to survey Willie critically, exclaimed, "Fine boy that! splendid head!" and entered him without another word.

Our brother's school experience was among our mother's sunniest days. Always at the head of his class, and ready to join in all healthful sports, he soon became a universal favorite. It was Will W. who

was chosen president of the club and debating society ; Will who was called on to open the exercises at commencement, and read the valedictory to the critical audience ; in short, our brother was the pride of his teachers as well as his parents and sisters. But, alas ! school-days do not always last, and at the expiration of Willie's a serious question arose : what should he become ?

Our father had originally intended him for the church, and his education had been directed with a view to that object ; yet, though Willie sincerely respected the office, he chose another. He would become a merchant. An active business life was his delight, and his parents would not force him to an unwilling service.

Willie went to the city, and in one of the leading mercantile houses secured a reputation for business, which he most richly deserved ; for he had used, in his business relations, the same untiring energy and perseverance which had characterized him as a student.

For a time our country home was gladdened by his weekly visits, and our precious mother learned to

watch for his footsteps, and listen for the voice of her boy ; but a cloud was lowering, and soon was she to taste the first drops in her cup of sorrow.

Willie had been with the firm of L. & W. but a short time when a complication of circumstances rendered it necessary that some one possessing unusual address, tact, and business talent should visit the South. At first it was determined that Mr. L., one of the prominent partners, should make the journey ; but shortly after this arrangement, an occurrence took place which rendered it impracticable, and the question arose, whom should they send ?

In the employment of the firm were several young men, all of whom had been in the business a longer time than our brother, and much interest was manifested among them as to the possibility of one of their number being sent. Great was the wonder then, which was shared by our brother, when he received a summons to meet the firm in their private office ; and, after a long conference, it was proposed to him to make the journey.

Willie came home, and though anxious to obtain our father's opinion, he could not disguise the fact

that he was exceedingly anxious to make a visit to the South.

And now did our angel-mother sit, with a smile upon her lips, and tears dimming her eyes. She was proud of her boy, of the confidence reposed in him ; and well she knew that new scenes and associations would be of service to him ; yet, oh, when she thought of the long, weary months which must necessarily elapse before she could hope to welcome him to his home, none, save those who have felt the depth and intensity of a mother's love, may know the feeling with which she saw him depart.

Our brother's journey to the South, in a business point of view, proved highly advantageous, and on his return he was received by the firm with the warmest commendations. Yet, ah, alas ! the excitement of business, the smiles and favors of his employers, was fast weaning him away from his boyhood's home.

Shortly after Willie's return, it was whispered that he had formed an engagement with Miss L., the accomplished sister of the senior partner, who was nearly connected with the Honorable —, of S—, and many began to talk of the honor and distinction about

to be conferred on the family by this union—so little does the world know and appreciate the feelings of private individuals, or regard the sundering of its most sacred ties.

The night that our brother's letter, conveying the intelligence of his attachment to Miss L., reached us, how many tears were shed, how many sleepless hours passed in our quiet country home; for, though we knew the one he had chosen to be lovely and lovable, we also knew that Willie, *our Willie*, could be *ours* no longer.

Our mother said but little. Her son's happiness was dearer to her than her own, and none knew the struggle with which she resigned it to the keeping of another.

And now, how can we speak of that separation which was shortly after effected by our brother's new relations, for an agreement had been made that he should have an interest in the business, and henceforward attend to the department in the South.

Ah, as we sit writing, the memory of *that day* comes crowding thickly up for utterance. Once more the circle is unbroken in our home, and we see our

precious mother, her arms tightly folded around our brother, and he promising her soon, so soon, to return.

For a while after his departure, a letter from Willie was among the great events of our lives; and though calm and collected at all other times, on such an occasion our mother was quite overcome, and seldom ate anything the remainder of the day.

At length a year rolled away, and that dreadful harbinger of desolation, the cry of war, resounded through the length and breadth of our devoted land, and none knew the deep anguish it brought to our mother's heart, or her oft-repeated prayer for her son's return.

Time sped on; brother stood arrayed against brother; children of the same parents, who had learned to lisp the first "Our Father" at the same mother's knee, were now banded to take away each other's lives, spurred on by the strange infatuation, the blind presumption of Southern demagogues, who, for their own emolument, were willing to trample on all law, and overthrow one of the best governments ever bequeathed to a people.

All communication with the South was now at an

end, and we watched and waited in vain for just one word from our brother.

Our precious mother uttered no word of complaint, yet, alas! the hope deferred was telling fearfully upon her. She seemed ever to be dreaming of her heart's idol—ever ready to take up the wail of Israel's stricken king, "Would to God that I had died for thee, my son! oh, my son, my son, my son!"

And now we come to a period which, through all the eventful scenes of life, can never be obliterated from our memory. Often, in the still watches of the night, when the wind, with fitful moan, is wailing around our home, we would fain fancy it a strange delusion, the creation of our excited imagination. But it may not be: the dread reality is too true. Our mother's chair is vacant; her smile no longer welcomes us: she no longer watches and waits for our brother's return, for the flowers that our hands have planted blossom above her grave, and our love, our prayers, and tears are all unheeded; for she has gone where "there shall be no more sorrow nor sighing, and He shall wipe away all tears from all eyes. There shall be no night there."

Another year has passed away, and our brother still wanders in a strange land. Perchance even now the spirit of our angel-mother is watching o'er her child; or, if he has joined her in the spirit-world, he may then know the depth of that devotion which was stronger than life itself.

“Lord! I long to be at home,
Where these changes never come;
Where the saints no winter fear,
Where 'tis spring throughout the year.”



ALONE.

[Written on hearing a sermon from the words, "The heart knoweth its own bitterness, and a stranger intermeddleth not."]

HARK to the night-wind,
Hear each dying moan,
Mournfully sighing,
Alone, all alone.

And as its echo
My wakeful soul fills,
Each throbbing heartstring
With agony thrills.

For not from without comes that desolate moan,
It is my soul sighing, alone! all alone!

I sigh to be free;
For some distant spot,
Where earth's dark shadows
May all be forgot.

Some one to pity,
Some friend ever near,
Whose skill could protect,
Through a world so drear.
But ah! as I listen, there comes that sad moan,
My wakeful soul sighing, alone! all alone!

And is there no one
To comfort and cheer—
For rest must we pine,
For sympathy here—
No one that can smooth
This dark vale we roam,
No one that can guide
The wanderer home?
And on through the world, with our sorrows unknown,
Must turn sadly away, alone! all alone!

Oh, when storms arise
The dark clouds appear,
The dear ones we love
No longer are near;

The billows roll on,
Unheeding thy moan,
The soul crieth out,
Alone! all alone!

Oh cease, troubled soul, oh cease thy sad moan,
Thou art not forsaken, thou art not alone!

Thou art not alone,
For thou hast a friend,
Whose love can protect,
And save to the end.
No longer despair,
Thou need'st not to roam
A wanderer here,
For thou hast a home—

A heaven of peace, where no sorrows are known,
There, weary one, rest, for there none are alone.



ONE OF LIFE'S PAGES.

"Put down that work, for the fire is dim;
You are looking so tired, worn, and thin—
Don't kill yourself for your mother's sake,
Don't do it, daughter, or my heart will break.
The work you say's for a lady fair,
A beautiful dress for a bride to wear,
But though the lady's so fine and gay,
Will she not wait, child, for a single day?"

"Oh mother, you say the fire is dim,
When I've done my work 'twill be bright again.
Don't look at me now, oh, don't look so,
I will not kill myself, oh no, oh no.
We've had nothing to eat all the day,
I'm hungry enough—when I get my pay
We will have a warm fire, by and by,
And something to eat, mother, you and I."

The poor girl's work was finished at last,
She went to the hall, three long hours passed,
Then a vain serving-girl came to say
Her mistress was busy, and could not pay.
The foolish creature began to chat,
Of beautiful dress, magnificent hat—
The poor girl sighed as she turned away,
And bitterly said, "I'm hungry to-day."

She hurried home to her mother's door,
And, grasping the latch, sank down on the floor.
The poor mother shrieked with anguish wild,
And folded her arms 'round her dying child.
"Oh God!" she cried, "must I see this day,
My darling is gone, and I cannot stay;
Oh Father, in mercy take me too,—
We'll need nothing to eat, child, I nor you."

Thus on through life the heartless and gay
Are trifling the golden hours away;
In some wretched place, some desolate spot,
A weary one toils, unblest and forgot.

There's a day coming, forever shall cease
The wail of the weary—they shall have peace.
Where shall the hard-hearted sinner appear?
Can we buy Heaven with mockery here?



OUR BRETHREN.

"THE POOR YE HAVE ALWAYS WITH YOU."

WHEN I look out of my window,
I see such a world of light—
A short way down in an alley,
The shadows fall black as night.
There the people look like spectres,
Gaunt spectres, thin, and so tall;
And yet I'm sure it is written,
That these are our brethren all.



HOLY PLACES.

ON Olivet, thou sacred spot,
Thy breath comes o'er me like a spell;
In thy green bowers, at eventide,
The dear Redeemer loved to dwell.

Bright Kedron, near thy silvery stream,
In sad but sweet Gethsemane,
I wander often in a dream,
And think I there the Saviour see.

On solemn Tabor's awful mount,
On cloud-enveloped Calvary,
Who can the wondrous scene recount?
Nature convulsed in agony.

Jerusalem! Jerusalem!
For thee our tears shall ever fall;

Where now thy goodly palaces?
Thy towering pride, thy lofty wall?

Does Shiloh's light no longer shine
On Sharon's fair and fertile plain?
Forsaken ones, disowned of Heaven,
Is blooming Carmel but a name?

WHAT I LIKE.

I LIKE a cheerful smile,
A bright and sunny face,
And though I little care for show,
I like a pleasant place.

I like a low, sweet song,
Sung as in olden time;
It brings back to my memory
The days of old "Lang-syne."

I like a pleasant talk
With some familiar friend;
I count it not a waste of time,
An hour thus to spend.

I like a fearless heart,
The noble and the true,
One who would scorn to act a part,
And I, my friend, like you.



TO MY BROTHER.

BROTHER, the months, the days, the hours,
Have glided noiselessly away,
Yet still I sit, while memory chimes
The melody of other days.
Once more the silent halls are filled
With echoes of the voices loved
In long ago, when hand clasped hand,
And each heart breathed a prayer for thee,
For thee, brother, the absent one.

Ah me! How things have changed since then!
The wreath is broken. One by one,
The dear soul-blossoms dropped away,
Till, weary of the damp chill air
Of earth, the fairest departed,
And we were left to weep alone.

Come back, brother, once more to know
That thou art near. Long I've waited.
When at night, yonder silver sheen
I've watched, there comes strange murmurings
Over its waters pale and cold,
And e'en the breezes sigh, *come back.*



NEVER DESPAIR.

NEVER despair, though the day may be clouded,
Sunshine and shadow, midnight and morn,
Let not thy heart with sadness be shrouded,
Up and be doing. steer through the storm.

Life is a battle, battle it bravely,
For to sit idle man was not born;
Heed not commotion,—fools, let them prattle,—
Duty thy watchword, onward, right on!

Much of our time has fled by idly,
Unmarked, unimproved, wasted in play;
We are forgetting the soul immortal!
While life, like a dream, passeth away.

Up and be doing, let us be earnest,

In every good work we have to do,

We shall find flowers fragrant and lovely,

Great souls and noble, hearts tried and true.



REST.

“REST!” cried a poor old man with silvery hair,
As to Heaven he lifted his dim eyes—
Fain would he leave a world so full of care:
Tired and worn, for rest he vainly sighs.

“Rest!” cried a soldier. “Where shall I find rest?”
A thousand lifeless forms before him lay—
“This ceaseless carnage; ah, this constant death!
Is this my glory, *this*, to kill and slay?”

“Rest!” cried a student, and he vainly sighed,
Then scanned the page, its reason clear and cold:
Ah, philosophic Greece, with learning rare,
Never gave rest unto a weary soul.

“Rest!” cried a traveller. “When shall I find rest?”
And he pursued his weary way alone.

“Oh, for some gentle heart to love me best,
To rest from toil, and find a quiet home.”

Methought an angel heard the vast complaint,
And to the land of light the echo bore;
An answering seraph then aloud proclaimed,
“Mortals, in Heaven there's *rest*, there toil is o'er.”



TO MY SISTER.

MARY, I miss thee now, I miss thy voice,—
There's none that can thy place to me supply;
When musing o'er some page, some poem choice,
My thoughts, dear sister, then will to thee fly.
When all is still, the world is wrapt in dreams,
And "nocte" o'er the earth her shadows fling,
I wish, dear sister, you were by my side,
To read once more the Idyls of the King.

'Tis many a month since I have seen thy face,
And yet I would not make thee sad, ah no;
Let's think that earth is not our dwelling-place,
In Heaven there's no parting, there's no woe.
And yet we'll hope on earth to meet again—
Some things have changed, yet, sister, we may see
Our hearts' own home, for it is just the same
As when we stood beneath the maple-tree.

The waters murmur, and the breezes sweep
Through the dim forest, making low, sad moan ;
The stars, like angels' eyes, their vigils keep
O'er each loved spot where we were wont to roam.
Good-night, dear one, for I can write no more ;
'Tis too late now to get another light,
Or I would trace these pages o'er and o'er ;
Good-night, dear Mary, once again, good-night.



TO MAY WHITE HOLMES.

LITTLE May, with eyes of blue,
Ringlets of a golden hue,
Fairy child, oh could thy feet
Ever tread a pathway sweet!
But for thee, dear little one,
There is cloud as well as sun.
Yet above life's cloud and storm
There's an everlasting morn,
Where the sun shall ever shine—
Darling child, may it be thine.
When earth's clouds have passed away,
May you dwell with angels, May.

LINES

WRITTEN FOR MY FATHER, ON THE DEATH OF
HIS FRIEND, MR. JOHN ARMONT, AN OLD GEN-
TLEMAN WHO WAS REMARKABLY PLEASING
AND GENTLE.

FAREWELL, my good old friend,
Our journeyings are o'er,
The pleasant hours we've spent
We'll spend on earth no more.
I miss thy cheerful face,
I miss thy honest smile—
Few hearts like thine are left,
Few hearts so free from guile.
The little children smiled
To see thee pass along,
And many young hearts weep
For the old man that's gone.

Farewell, my good old friend,
Our journeyings are o'er;
May we meet in that land
Where friends shall part no more.



THE VILLAGE.

THERE was an unusual stir in the village. The grocer stood with his arms akimbo, looking across the way, at the quiet brown structure known as the parsonage. The loungers at the post-office had forgotten their favorite topics to discuss the minister, and what at that time proved to be a subject of greater interest, namely, the *minister's choice*.

The ladies of the village considered the event of sufficient importance to call for a convocation of their fair selves, and, precisely at two, might have been seen, with sundry little parcels of biscuits, cake, etc., wending their way to the Widow Green's, where, over a "cup of tea," they discussed the merits of the case.

"A minister's wife," said Mrs. Colonel Stubbins, who, in consideration of being the mistress of the

finest mansion in the place, was allowed to speak first, "should be a pattern of godliness."

"Exactly, my dear Mrs. Colonel," chimed in the doctor's wife, "ready to join in every good work."

"Hospitable, and always ready to receive her husband's parishioners," vouchsafed another dame, "like our good Mrs. Garvin, if you remember, my dear," nodding in the direction of the doctor's wife, "her seed-cake and pickled salmon were really delicious."

The aforesaid Mrs. Garvin had once dwelt at the parsonage, but finding it impossible to attend to the wants of her family, officiate at all the sewing-circles, benevolent societies, school feasts, etc., and at the same time be at home to half the parish, and preserve her good looks and cheerful words for the one dearest above all others, she one day rushed into the minister's study, and, throwing her arms around his neck, sobbed out that she feared she had not been a good wife, and had kept him back in his work.

The minister was but human, and though he had thrown his whole soul in his labor, on that occasion he not even stopped to think that the sermon which

he was preparing with such elaborate care, to touch the hearts and please the intellectual senses of his hearers, might suffer from the interruption.

Folding his wife in his arms, he endeavored to soothe her, calling her his poor, tired darling, his good angel; yet, though it was a great comfort to have her husband near her, yet all his care and attention could not bring back her exhausted strength; and on the following Sabbath, when his congregation were wondering what had become of their minister, Charles Garvin sat beside the death-bed of his wife, bowed in an agony of woe.

Reader, this is not a fancy sketch; for not thirty miles from this great city, where the shepherds of the flock dwell, even in marble halls, and dispense the Word to their fashionable hearers, for salaries varying from fifteen to twenty-five thousand dollars, there are true followers of the Great Teacher, who sacrifice not only themselves, but their loved ones, for a bare pittance. Their wives die young, their children are left orphans, and, under these depressing circumstances, is it a wonder that they rarely reach the intel-

lectual heights of their more highly favored brethren? Yet let these earnest followers of the lowly Nazarene take comfort in the thought that, at the last great reckoning, things shall be more evenly adjusted by the great Judge of all; and while it may be possible for those who consider a *fat living a call from God*, to be rejected by Him, they shall at last be received as good and faithful servants into the joy of their Lord.

After Mrs. Garvin had been laid beneath the sod, her husband's parishioners discovered that she was really an excellent woman, and forthwith began to extol her many virtues.

This late acknowledgment of his wife's worth did little toward soothing the sorrows of their minister, who, feeling that his usefulness was over, asked for a discharge.

The coming of the new minister had occasioned considerable bustle in the village, and when it was discovered that he came alone, and had neither wife, mother, or sister to share the parsonage, the female portion of the community, with but one or two excep-

tions, immediately took him in their care and keeping, and forthwith commenced a series of raids upon himself and his household.

Mrs. Merton, the grocer's wife, made a weekly visit to his kitchen and larder, Mrs. Colonel Stubbins took a general survey of the premises, from attic to cellar, while the Doctor's wife, having undertaken the charge of his health and spirits, saw fit to inflict any number of unseasonable calls, and last, but by no means least, in the catalogue of his trials, was the attentions which a certain Miss Jenkins paid to his buttons and buttonholes.

For a time, however, the good man bore all these inconveniences with commendable patience; encouraging himself with the thought that the one whom he had chosen to share his fortune would be able to do much toward relieving him from these troublesome attentions, and to this end he sat about preparing for his bride, and, the arrangements being completed, he bade his officious friends farewell, promising soon to return with his wife.

"May the good Lord bless the poor lady," said the superannuated wife of the old sexton. "It's tu be hoped,

sir, she'll not be worried to death, like our poor dead Mrs. Garvin."

"You will have to help me to guard against such a deplorable event, Aunt Essy," said the young clergyman, shaking her hand.

"It's little that the loiks of an old 'oman loik mesel' can do, sir, but I'd recommend ye tu Miss Laura yonder. Bless her heart, though she has a deal of trouble hersel', she's jest the salt of the 'arth, an' I say it as knows—Worth a dozen of your Deborah Jenkinses, an' all thar skirmishins 'round 'mong yer buttons, sir."

Perhaps the minister was of the same opinion, but he only smiled, as he turned away.

The gray shadows of evening had already flung themselves over the village, ere the ladies retired from the Widow Green's tea-table, and prepared to depart.

As a finale to the all-important subject, Miss Deborah ventured to hope "that the mistress of the parsonage would be made of real flesh and blood, and not a child-woman, to be made a doll of by her husband, like some ministers' wives she

knew of," and Miss Deborah Jenkins drew herself up to the full extent of her five feet ten inches.

So much interest had this last remark elicited that the ladies failed to observe the approach of a close-covered carriage, which wended its way to the parsonage: and thus it was that the minister and his wife was allowed to enjoy the first evening of their arrival "at home," undisturbed by visitors.

"What a beautiful spot of peaceful quiet, Walter," said the minister's wife, as she stood gazing from the study-window, which overlooked the village, from the eminence on which the parsonage was situated.

"A beautiful spot, Nellie; but for the peaceful quiet, my darling, I cannot give the encouragement I would wish. I confess I have not had sufficient courage to introduce the subject before, but my little wife must expect to find that the spirit of mischief, of gossip, and disorder dwells even in this fair village. I grieve to say that all your gentleness and good-will will not be sufficient to shield you from the prejudice of the narrow-minded and meddlesome, and had I not have known the strength and value of my wife's affection, I should have hesitated before I asked you

to be the sharer of my sorrows as well as joys. But let it encourage you, dearest, to know that even in this place, you will find those who can appreciate you; and I do not despair, with the blessing of Heaven, of yet driving the spirit of mischief from this fair spot."

"Visitors in the parlor, mem," said a light-haired Irish damsel, thrusting her flaxen head in at the door; "Missus Colonel Stubbins and Miss Deborah Jenkins," inclining the flaxen curls in the direction of the minister.

"Yes, Biddy. Your mistress will be down presently," and Walter Winton glanced encouragingly at his wife, who prepared to descend to the parlor.

Mrs. Colonel Stubbins happened to be in one of her amiable moods; it yet being an early hour in the day and no untoward circumstance having transpired in either the kitchen or nursery to mar her serenity. She extended her hand with the greatest cordiality, and ventured to hope that both the place and the people would prove agreeable to their minister's wife; adding, in a patronizing tone, that as she had seen

much of the world, her experience might be of service, and if, my dear, you should need my advice, in any perplexity concerning either the parish or your domestic arrangements, do not hesitate to call me to aid you.

During these remarks Miss Deborah Jenkins had improved her opportunity to scrutinize the mistress of the parsonage, and had quite made up her mind as to the cost of her attire, from the tiny gaiter in which her foot was encased to the linen collar that encircled her throat; and was busy contrasting the girlish figure and sweet face with what she was pleased to term her own dignified proportions.

When Mrs. Colonel Stubbins ceased speaking, she advanced two steps, and extending the tips of two of her icy fingers, "hoped that *Mrs. Winton* was not greatly fatigued by her journey," and forthwith launched out in a dissertation concerning her own power of endurance, which she seemed to reckon among the cardinal virtues.

All things must have an end, and finally Miss Deborah ceased speaking, and the ladies remembered that they had to be at home before luncheon, and

took their leave. Yet other visitors soon arrived, and the shades of evening gathered over the parsonage before they found themselves alone.

“And now, dearest,” said the minister, as they sat down to their late tea, “you have had a fair glimpse of the people of my parish. Which of the ladies interested you most?”

“Really, Walter, they are so different that they all interest me, though in a different way. Mrs. Colonel Stubbins seems a kind sort of person, though rather officious and meddlesome. Yet I think her more agreeable than Miss Deborah, who, to tell the truth, I am half afraid of. She is so good, so excellent, that she really makes me feel quite insignificant every time she mentions my name.”

“You will excuse her, my dear, when I tell you that she considers that she had a prior claim to this dwelling. The gossips say she had quite made up her mind to become the second Mrs. Garvin, and will never forgive my poor friend for leaving the place. What do you think of Mrs. Ashton and her daughter?”

“They are really interesting,—so gentle and unas-

suming; a settled sadness seems to possess them both."

"They have seen a great deal of trouble. To please her uncle, in whose care she had been placed at the death of her parents, she married a naval officer, who was supposed to possess a large fortune; whether this supposition was correct I am not able to decide. Captain Ashton led a reckless, extravagant life on land as well as sea, and the visits which he paid his family were generally productive of as much sorrow as joy; for though Mary Ashton was devoted to her husband's interests, and proved herself a most exemplary wife, she felt that his influence and example were hurtful to their children, particularly to their son, a gay, spirited youth, who was fast acquiring his father's habits.

"As you remarked, my dear, Mrs. Ashton is particularly gentle and affable, and during the Captain's lifetime, was never heard to utter a word of complaint. At his death, which was hastened by his own recklessness, she would have been quite destitute if it had not been for a moderate sum that her uncle had settled upon herself. And now, Nellie," the minister

continued, "I come to the saddest part of the story. Mrs. Ashton had hoped that now that she was left alone with her children, her son would see the necessity of breaking away from his wild companions, and endeavor to assist her, but, alas! poor lady, her cup of affliction was not yet full.

"One day young Ashton had gone with a party of young men to the forest. Before joining in the sport he told his companions he would go to old Barton's, the locksmith's, for a favorite rifle, and started off in that direction.

"Shortly after, as two men were passing by the locksmith's dwelling they were startled by a loud report, and after proceeding a few yards, made up their minds to return. When they entered the dwelling a terrible spectacle met their eyes. Old Barton lay lifeless upon the floor, with a ghastly wound in his temple, from which the blood was flowing, while young Ashton stood bending over the old man, holding in his hand the rifle, which had his name graven upon it.

"I need not linger over this terrible affair. It was believed by the greater part of the community that

he had taken the old man's life, though there were a few that believed him innocent, though they admitted the circumstances were against him. Yet even their faith in his innocency was somewhat shaken when it was discovered that he had escaped from the hand of justice. Still, his poor mother, Charles Garvin, and some that knew him best, maintain that there was not anything vicious or brutal about him, although he was reckless and of a roving disposition, that had often been the source of much trouble. I sincerely trust he may yet be proved innocent of this great crime."

"The son of such a mother could not commit so foul an act," Mrs. Winton returned, as they arose from the tea-table.

The next morning, the mistress of the parsonage commenced her new duties, and, before three months had elapsed, had quite surprised the ladies of the parish, for, while she was courteous and kind to all, she contrived to manage her own affairs, much to the annoyance of the officious and meddling.

One evening, as they were returning from a visit which they had been making to Aunt Essy's cottage,

they were met at the parsonage gate by a stranger, who requested the minister to accompany him to a neighboring village, to see a man who was dying, and had something of importance to communicate to the clergyman.

Bidding his wife farewell, the minister started off on his journey. The next day, while awaiting his return, Mrs. Winton was surprised by a visit from another stranger, who brought a letter from her husband, who said he would return on the morrow, and in the meantime asked her to provide for the wants of the stranger. Although much surprised, Mrs. Winton hastened to bestow the hospitality of the parsonage on her visitor, and while busy with his entertainment, failed to observe a pair of curious eyes, that eagerly watched every movement.

Three hours later Mrs. Barlow, the Doctor's wife, and Miss Deborah sat closeted together, discussing a subject that seemed particularly interesting to them both, judging from their excited manner.

"I really feel disgraced myself," said Miss Jenkins, drawing herself up until she looked more like a grenadier than ever.

"A very proper feeling, my dear. They must have quarrelled, and, during his absence, she entertains her friends. Really, things have come to a pretty pass; I think it is high time for the vestry to take matters in hand; I shall say as much to the Doctor."

The following morning the minister returned, and had just sat down to chat with his wife, when Doctor Barlow was announced.

"I am sorry to make such an unseasonable call," the Doctor began, fidgeting on his chair, "but the fact is—" Here the Doctor came to a sudden pause, which greatly surprised his companions.

"You are quite welcome, Doctor," the minister said, endeavoring to reassure him. "Is there anything I can do for you?"

"Well, the fact is," continued the Doctor, "some talk has got around concerning your wife having visitors during your absence. Indeed, your journey was attributed to a quarrel, and some thought best to call a meeting of the vestry, but, as I know the place, I would not consent, but thought it best to speak to you on the subject."

"My wife certainly had a visitor, who still remains

our guest. I am happy to say Mrs. Winton and myself have always been the best of friends. Really, Doctor," the minister continued in a graver tone, "it is with the view of showing you how far the spirit of misrepresentation and mischief will distort matters, that I consent to give an explanation of my absence. The evening on which I took the journey, I had been with Mrs. Winton to pay a visit to Aunt Essy. On our return we were met by a stranger, who brought me a letter from a dying man, who begged me to come to him immediately. Without going over the harrowing scene, I need only add that the wretched man proved to be the murderer of poor old Barton. He said he had had a furious quarrel with the locksmith, and shot him in a rage, and then escaped through an open window. This avowal he made in the presence of a magistrate, and then begged me to search out young Ashton, whom he had so cruelly wronged. I succeeded in finding the poor young fellow, and judging it best not to surprise his family too hastily, sent him to my wife to be cared for, until I was able to return. Now, Doctor, you have heard the story. If a suffering family are relieved from their burden, and a son

restored, I shall not even regret the injustice which has been done to one of the best of women, my wife."

The Doctor went home to scold *his wife for her gossiping propensities.*













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